

PANHANDLE HOME HEALTH

A Division of the Panhandle Health District

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Mission

To provide compassionate, caring services that enhance the quality of life and the independent function of the residents with home health needs in the five northern counties of Idaho.

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208-415-5160
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800-226-2053

A Question of H1N1

A new virus in the air can be scary, particularly for people living with chronic health problems or recovering from recent surgery. Questions in such situations are reasonable and answers with good, trustworthy information can do much to lower the anxiety level.

Here are some frequently asked questions that apply to people who are receiving health care services at home. The answers come from information supplied by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

How is the H1N1 flu different from the flu that comes around every year?

The H1N1 virus targets different groups than the seasonal flu targets. For example, H1N1 has hit people under age 25 in the greatest numbers and showed the least interest in people age 65 and older. Seasonal flu can be dangerous for the 65 and older age group, which is why health experts encourage the seasonal flu shot for seniors and tell them they're low-priority for the H1N1 vaccination.

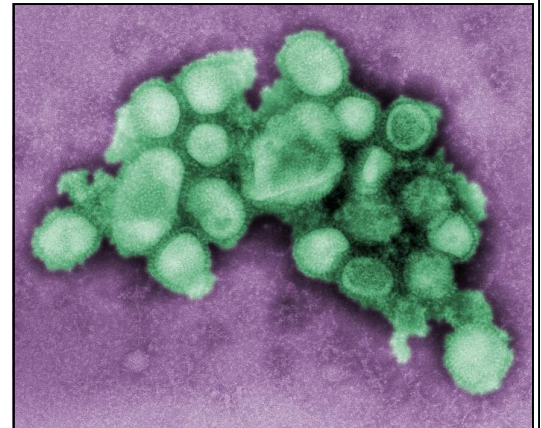
Symptoms for both flues are respiratory—fever of about 100 degrees, coughs, sneezes, sore throat, fatigue. But H1N1 starts suddenly and hits hard. Seasonal flu is more gradual.

Who is in the greatest danger from H1N1 influenza?

Pregnant women, children younger than 5 years old and people of any age with chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes or a heart conditions have developed complications from H1N1 infections more often than other people. Complications range from pneumonia, sinus or ear infections, bronchitis and respiratory failure to death. H1N1 can worsen chronic health conditions.

It's important to know the signs when medical attention is necessary immediately. In children, the signs include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being excessively irritable
- Flu-like symptoms improve, then return



with fever and worse cough

- Fever with a rash

In adults, the signs include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or stomach
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

I'm home recuperating from a stroke. How can I protect myself from H1N1?

Make sure to keep a two-week supply of your medication at home, and don't stop taking it without consulting your doctor, even if you believe you have flu symptoms. Report any breathing problems to your health care provider immediately.

Ask anyone who's sick to stay out of your home, in fact they really shouldn't venture out of their homes. If people are sneezing or coughing around you, remind them to cover their mouths, preferably by coughing into their sleeves or a tissue, then throwing the tissue in the trash. The flu virus is transmitted through the air when people cough and sneeze. Stay at least six feet away from anyone showing symptoms.

Ask visitors to wash their hands or keep an alcohol-based hand sanitizer where visitors can find it. Wash your hands regularly and disinfect commonly touched surfaces—doorknobs, light switches—after

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Panhandle Home Health

Health Care Quality Topnotch for Fifth Consecutive Year

Hayden—Panhandle Health District's (PHD) Home Health program has won its fifth consecutive national award for exemplary quality in healthcare service.

Only five home healthcare agencies in Idaho received Avatar International Inc.'s prestigious award for Exceeding Patient Expectations. Avatar is a leading consulting and research firm that surveys patient satisfaction in health care. PHD's home health program exceeded patient expectations for quality of care, reliability and personalized services.

"The hallmark of exceptional service to patients is to consistently meet or exceed their expectations—not always an easy task. Panhandle Health District's home health program has demonstrated that it exceeds its patients' expectations in a tangible and measurable manner," said David Medvedeff, PharmD and Avatar CEO. "I congratulate the Panhandle Health District for its continued and impressive efforts to put patients first."

PHD's Home Health program began offering doctor-ordered skilled medical care to homebound patients in northern Idaho's five northern counties in 1966. The not-for-profit program matches patients with registered and licensed practical nurses, physical and occupational therapists, speech pathologists and medical social workers.

"Because we're a local program, our clients are our neighbors, the people we do business with, the people we sit next to in school and church," said Mary DeTienne, director of PHD's Home Health program. "This award tells us our clients are happy with our care,



Home Health celebrates its fifth Avatar award

and that's very important to us. We thank physicians in the community for referring their patients in need of Home Health services to our agency."

Panhandle Home Health is one of only two not-for-profit home health programs in the five northern counties and reaches many homebound patients in remote locations. Home health services are covered by Medicaid, Medicare, VA, private insurance and more.

More people are turning to home health care as medical insurance shortens hospital stays and costs for hospital care climb. Panhandle Home Health is a division of the health district and managed out of PHD's Hayden headquarters.

To learn more about Panhandle Health District's Home Health program, visit www.phd1.idaho.gov or call 415-5160.

Meet the Home Health Staff



Delia Hanson, a Certified Nurses Assistant, is the Home Health aide coordinator. Home Health aides assist clients with their personal care needs under the direction of an RN or therapist.

They work closely with Occupational Therapy to teach clients independence

with bathing, showering, etc.

Dee schedules home health aide visits and cares for patients in their homes. She stocks nursing bags with

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visitors leave.

If you are younger than 65, the H1N1 vaccination offers the best protection and you are in a vaccination target group, meaning you're eligible for the first vaccinations given. But if you're allergic to eggs, the vaccination is not for you.

Pay attention to your health and contact your medical provider immediately if you notice flu-like symptoms. Antivirals, drugs that fight viruses, are available by pre-

scription, and orders and maintains all the medical supplies for Home Health.

"She's exceptional with patient and staff," says Mary DeTienne, Home Health division director. "She's always positive and very sensitive."

Except for a short break, Dee has worked with Home Health since 1979.

"I really enjoy the job and everyone here," she says. "I can do supplies and still see clients. That's important to me."

scription but are most effective when started as soon as symptoms appear.

Panhandle Health District's Home Health staff has been vaccinated against the H1N1 flu virus. They also stay in close contact with patients' doctors and will report signs of flu symptoms as well as any other health problems. If you have questions about H1N1 influenza, visit the Panhandle Health District website at www.phd1.idaho.gov or call the toll-free H1N1 hotline at 1-866-528-3501.

